



GHANA

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Population, Health, and Nutrition Briefing Sheet

Country Profile

Ghana is a newly democratic West African nation of roughly 18 million. Although political and economic progress in Ghana has been substantial in the 1990s, the country continues to face many of the severe challenges to development that afflict the region as a whole, including rapid population growth, widespread poverty, and generally poor health conditions.

USAID Strategy

USAID health programs are working to:

- Increase the use of more effective family planning methods and improve the sustainability of family planning services;
- Promote and support a more effective response to HIV/AIDS, particularly improvement in the prevention and control of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs); and
- Increase the use of child survival interventions, including immunization, oral rehydration to treat diarrheal diseases, and improved breastfeeding and weaning practices.

Major Program Areas

Expanding and Improving Family Planning Services. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, National Population Council, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and donors, USAID/Ghana promotes policy reforms, improved distribution of family planning commodities, and a strengthened private sector role in providing family planning services. The mission supports training, facility rehabilitation, and commodity supply in both the public and private sectors to increase access to and use of modern contraceptive methods, particularly more effective, long-term methods.

HIV/AIDS Information and Prevention. As a leading donor to HIV/AIDS prevention in Ghana, the mission supports the development of more effective HIV/STI diagnosis and surveillance, and provides local NGOs and U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) with

training in prevention and counseling. USAID also supports information, education, and communication activities to promote safer sexual behavior and has developed a policy-making model that shows the potentially severe economic and health impacts of HIV/AIDS in Ghana.

Results

- The proportion of women using modern contraceptives has risen from just 5.5 percent in 1988, to 10 percent in 1993, and an estimated 22 percent in 1995. Fertility has dropped from 6.4 children per woman in 1988 to an estimated 5.2 children per woman in 1997.
- Condom distribution has increased more than five-fold since 1986, the year the first AIDS case was identified in Ghana.
- The Ghanaian Registered Nurse Midwives Association has trained more than 400 service providers, particularly in rural areas, to promote increased use of quality contraceptive methods.
- Through USAID support, Ghana has developed one of the most advanced national HIV/AIDS/STI sentinel surveillance systems in Africa.
- The commercial sector's contribution to the provision of short-term contraceptive methods, such as pills and condoms, grew from 50 percent in 1993, to 72 percent in 1995.
- With USAID support, UNICEF has responded quickly to crisis situations, such as yellow fever and cerebral spinal meningitis outbreaks, and worked to develop sustainable child survival services. In 1996, USAID contributed funds to immunize more than 370,000 infants against childhood diseases.

Success Stories

- Facilitated by USAID, policy dialogue has been a critical element in the success of Ghana's family planning efforts since 1994 and has helped establish the National Population Council (NPC) as an effective



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tive national coordinating body. The NPC has deployed regional population officers nationwide, formed regional committees to promote the twin concepts of population and development, and directed the public sector promotion of long-term contraceptive methods. The NPC has also effectively helped raise the importance of adolescent reproductive health programs.

- A major 1997 accomplishment was the establishment of an endowment fund to support activities of the Ghana Social Marketing Foundation (GSMF), the first such endowment ever in social marketing. Along with the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, the principal NGO distributor, GSMF has expanded the range of contraceptives available in the private sector to include a variety of effective, long-term methods such as injectables, intrauterine devices, and Norplant[®] implants.

Continuing Challenges

The mission has successfully accomplished its family planning policy objectives after only three years of an anticipated five-year program. To maintain the program's momentum, the mission is planning to shift remaining resources to expand preservice training (in collaboration with the Japanese government), mass media campaigns, and social marketing activities. USAID plans to promote increased child survival activities using U.S. PVOs and local NGOs. Special emphasis will be given to polio eradication and infectious disease initiatives.

There is consensus among Ghanaian officials, USAID, and other donors that not enough is being done to slow down the spread of HIV in Ghana. As the major donor in this area, USAID has moved from its previous emphasis on testing and counseling to a more proactive stance. The mission will continue to urge the Ghanaian government to allocate more resources to the problem and will target preventive interventions to a new, expanded set of high-risk groups that include young men, transport workers, and migrant workers. USAID will also continue to ensure that Ghana's regional HIV/AIDS/STI laboratory network provides proper surveillance.



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